

Questions and Answers from Energy Webinar on 11/21/19

Note: you may not see your specific question because similar questions have been combined into one.

CIP Questions:

1. If we ask for doctor's statement isn't that against HIPPA laws being, we are not medical professionals? If a client comes in and provides a medical note, how long is the medical note valid? **No. You will not ask the doctor directly you are asking the client to get the doctor's statement. The client's statement can be accepted, unless questionable then request doctor's statement. The counties must be consistent with how they determine emergencies. Evaluate on a case by case basis.**
2. If client has a disconnect notice and weather is not a crisis, but they have medication that needs to be kept in the refrigerator, does this qualify as a crisis? **No, A household is in a crisis if it is currently experiencing or is in danger of experiencing a life-threatening or health-related emergency related to heating and cooling. Refrigeration is not a heating or cooling emergency.**
3. Why is a household only considered to be in crisis if there is a medical condition? There are many households that are in crisis, but they are healthy and need help, why can't we help? **Crisis must be tied to a life-threatening situation or health-related emergency. A health-related emergency may not necessarily be a medical condition. Evaluate on a case by case situation.**
4. If a client does not have a disconnect for electric, but comes in and states for example, they have a broken leg and are unable to work, and this household has medical conditions, is this considered a crisis, and can we pay the bill? **No, they must have a disconnect notice.**
5. Can you elaborate on consideration of outside temperatures? Should we set reasonable thresholds for cold weather on high temperatures in the summer? **Document how the temperature outside could cause a health-related or life-threatening emergency if they do not have a heating or cooling source or if the heating and cooling source is disconnected. Evaluate on a case by case basis. The counties must be consistent with how they determine emergencies.**
6. What if the same client comes in the office every month with the same issues about the child has asthma and uses a nebulizer. The client has not worked in months. Is paying her bill every month relieving her crisis? **If the applicant has a history of being in energy- related crisis situations, explore all other resources to assist in alleviating the current crisis. (Manual section- CIP 400.03 G). Evaluate on a case by case basis. The counties must be consistent with how they determine emergencies.**
7. We often have households that have no income. What is the maximum time frame that can be used when a disconnect date has been provided for several weeks out if the client states that

they will not have income to pay? Would it be a crisis if it several weeks away? **Evaluate on a case by case basis. See Policy 400.03, I. 1.**

8. If a county is out of CIP funds, are we allowed to tell our clients we are out of CIP funds and let them decide if they want to apply? **Yes. Clients have the right to apply at any time whether the county has available CIP funding or not. It can be explained that there are no funds available and that if they apply they will be denied, but the client still has the right to apply if they want.**
9. If a mail in application is received and the client calls in to complete the interview on the 9th or 10th business day does the client get a second DSS-8185 with another 10 days to provide information. **Yes, but explain funds may be exhausted.**
10. If a client came in on 10/19/19 and the agency approved the case due to medical, and the client returned on 10/30/19 same issue nothing changed per policy CIP does not pay utilities back to back what would you suggest for this issue? **If the applicant has a history of being in energy-related crisis situations, explore all other resources to assist in alleviating the current crisis (Manual section-CIP 400.03G). Evaluate on a case by case basis. The counties must be consistent with how they determine emergencies.**
11. If a CIP applicant state they cannot pay their utility/heat source bill because they had other bills to pay, is this considered a crisis? **No, A household is in a crisis if it is currently experiencing or is in danger of experiencing a life-threatening or health-related emergency.**
12. When someone applies for CIP and requests assistance with a gas provider as well as electric provider at the same time, can we issue benefits for both of these providers at the same time, granted they meet all eligibility requirements? **Yes, if the household has a cutoff notice for the electric and the gas heater requires electricity to run.**
13. For CIP with gas companies, if the client has a past due balance, can we pay the past due balance as well as pay for delivery? **Yes; See Policy 400.04, C., 5.**
14. If a client comes into the agency and does not have a cut off notice should the agency take the application and then deny the application due to not having a crisis? The agency should not screen the client and turn them away and not take an application? The client has the right to apply at any time they come into the agency. **The agency can screen the client and if determined not eligible, they can explain to the client and if the client states they want to make an application take the application and deny it.**

15. CIP application for gas, if a client has an inactive account, and needs to pay the old closed account and a new deposit in order to restore services, can we pay both if the total amount is under \$600.00 and the inactive amount is under 12 months old? **Yes. See Policy 400.04, C-5.**
16. Can you talk about the importance of documenting the crisis description being tied to a life threatening or health related crisis? **Document how the household member's health would be affected, or life would be threatened if they do not have a heating or cooling source or if the heating and cooling source is disconnected. Evaluate on a case by case basis. The counties must be consistent with how they determine emergencies.**
17. If a client comes in three consecutive months, is that considered an ongoing situation even if they have health issues? **If the applicant has a history of being in energy- related crisis situations, explore all other resources to assist in alleviating the current crisis. (Manual section- CIP 400.03 G). Evaluate on a case by case basis. The counties must be consistent with how they determine emergencies.**

Client comes in and applies for CIP at 4:45 pm with a disconnect notice. Client reports no income, however FNS shows that two months prior the household had income. Shut off will be at 5:00 pm and the household reports no current income. How far must we go to verify their statement with only 15 minutes to avoid a crisis for the household? Or vice versa, reported no income, but now states they have income. **During the interview if the client states they have no income you may accept the client's statement. During the interview the client states they have income the income must be verified.**

18. Can you pay the electric bill and heating bill together in a CIP application if the customer has a disconnect for both with no available resources to pay either bill? **Yes, if the heating source is low or depleted and the heating source requires electricity to run and there is a cut off notice.**
19. When we determine that a household has a crisis, such as being unable to work as well as medical conditions, and the household has a disconnect notice plus current charges. Are we able to pay more than the amount with only CIP program? **Possibly. Evaluate on a case by case basis. Every household situation is not the same. Paying the entire bill will eliminate the crisis for the household and they are less likely to come back in for services. This would apply to a household that has a health related or life-threatening issue without heat or cooling, and have a specific crisis that you know will go for a designated time frame. Such as someone's health requires heat but they cannot pay because they broke their leg and will be out of work for three months.**
20. Based on the thought process of alleviating the crisis in question #19 so they don't have to come back, can you help a family that's going to receive a cutoff notice prior to getting their next paycheck or do we still have to wait until they have a disconnect notice? **The household must have a disconnect notice or verify a disconnect date. Refer to slide 5 in webinar, there is an example.**

21. You said “pledge as much as you can” when alleviating a client’s crisis if they indicate their crisis will persist. Does this mean pledging their full \$600.00 amount allotted or only what the bill amount will be? **Evaluate on a case by case basis to determine the amount needed to alleviate the crisis. This may result in the full allocation depending on the counties determination of need.**
22. Do we have to verify termination of income for a previous employer if that is what Medicaid already has on file or do, we accept client statement they are no longer working? **Accept client’s statement that they are not working, unless questionable.**
23. On the Energy pending apps report-the system shows a due date of two days out for all applications, if the source is disconnected or out of fuel, this is an emergency application that needs to be processed in 18 hours-the due date should show the following day? **DSS and NCFast are aware of this issue and are working together to fix the due date on the Energy Pending Apps by Worker Detail Report to display the correct due date if the applicant’s heating/cooling service is disconnected or they do not have a heating or cooling source. Counties will be notified via communication from NCFast when the issue is resolved.**
24. If the client does not have a turn off notice, you state that you cannot deny the person the right to complete an application. How can you complete the application without the account and balance information? Would the agency be responsible for getting account and balance information? **Look back at an old application if they have one. Ask for the account number when the assessment is being done, or the application is being keyed. The system requires account information.**
25. We were told that we had to get invoices from gas companies when doing CIP applications before the payment request is created so that the application can be edited for the correct amount needed to fill the tank. We are understanding for CIP a credit is not allowed on the account. This takes a lot of time and if it’s ok to have a credit on CIP accounts we will stop doing this. **This is correct. You should not add a CIP application into a payment request for gas and oil companies until you receive the invoice from the energy provider. Once you receive the invoice back, edit the application and make the corrections to the crisis account. Then you confirm your changes and add the application to a payment request for payment.**
26. The Monitor Heater does require kerosene and electricity to operate. Again, I asked this question to policy staff last year and told I could only assist the client with the kerosene as that product could be considered “primary” and the electric would be “secondary”? **CIP can pay both if the electric is required to run the kerosene heater.**
27. A person who receives Social Security, or SSI are they automatically eligible for CIP? **No, Document how the household member’s health would be affected, or life would be threatened if they do not have a heating or cooling source or if the heating and cooling source is disconnected. Evaluate on a case by case basis. The counties must be consistent with how they determine emergencies.**

LIEAP Questions:

1. Can you address LIEAP policy 300.06 B.2.b. if there is a change during the application, do we give the client an additional 10 days to provide this new information needed? **Yes, when information is received process the application within 2 business days.**
2. LIEAP processing are you required to process the case within 2 days from the date of receipt of needed information? **Yes**
3. With the new policy that clients can mail, fax or complete applications by epass, if we can't reach the client for an interview, we must send a request for information. **A client cannot apply for assistance on epass. They can print a LIEAP application and mail, fax, or bring it in person.** If the client comes in on the 10th business day, do they get a second DSS-8185 to return information. **Yes, but explain funds may be exhausted.**
4. Manual Section 300.05 states when we can waive the office interview. Will this be changed since you indicated a face to face interview is not mandatory? **No, policy 300.05 states examples of special provisions for waiving the office interview. This will be determined on a case by case basis.**
5. Do we count gross income for LIEAP? **Yes**
6. LIEAP application if their bill includes water, sewage, etc. can we pay this because the electric is not billed separately? **Yes, due to LIEAP being a credit to the client's account, there is no requirement to separate the charges such as water, sewage, trash, etc.**
7. For pending information for LIEAP, you stated 10 business days not 10 calendar days. **10 business days.**
8. Public housing who include utilities with rent, can they apply for LIEAP? **Anyone has the right to apply. Policy states: A household in public housing where heating costs are included in the rent, are not vulnerable. This includes households whose rent is increased to cover excess heating costs. This also includes individuals who have paid excess for heating in the last 12 months. For additional verification of a heating arrangement in public housing, contact the local public housing authority. Policy 300.08, 4.**
9. Income verification for LIEAP you are referred to the Integrated Manual which leads you to 4050.3. Verification Hierarchy, the last resort is to accept the client's statement. Is this still the case for LIEAP since CIP policy changed effective 10/1/19 requiring verification? **Yes, but you can use other sources such as the FNS, MA or WFFA files to verify that what the client is stating is in line with what these programs are counting. Income used from other programs must be representative of the base period month. If it is not, then the income is questionable, and**

verification would be required. As a last resort use client's statement. Ex: Client's employer went out of business or moved out of town and the client is not able to provide wage verification. Then client's statement can be accepted.

10. For LIEAP pending cases, in the case of giving the client a 2nd ten days to provide needed information because of a change in the pending LIEAP, how does NCFast know that my deadline is the second 10th day? **The system is not designed to conduct second 10 business days. The worker will have to track when the 2nd ten days expires.**
11. For LIEAP pending cases, in the case of giving the client a 2nd ten days to provide needed information because of a change in the pending LIEAP, how does NCFast know that my deadline is the second 10th day? **The system is not designed to conduct second 10 business days. The worker will have to track when the 2nd ten days expires.**

Dual Questions:

1. If a client has a moratorium, are we still to evaluate client for CIP/LIEAP or do we key and deny? **If the client has a moratorium, there is no crisis because they would not have a cutoff notice. They might be eligible for LIEAP since no Crisis is required for that program.**
2. If a household has \$100.00 credit on their vendor account. Would we consider this a crisis if the vendor will not fill an order without the client needing an additional \$400.00 to come out and fill an order? **If the credit is from LIEAP they can come in for CIP and if eligible be approved.**
3. If client heats with gas furnace but it does not work, and they are using space heaters can we pay electric with LIEAP? **No, LIEAP is paid for primary heating source. Explore option for a dual CIP/LIEAP application if health related emergency is tied to the furnace problems. Policy 400.04 C., 6.**
4. County's process for Energy Assistance intake is to have the client sign a paper application at the front desk and then see an intake worker to screen for eligibility. If when the worker gets the client and lets the client know that they will not be eligible, and the client states they do not want to continue the application process. Would the application have to be keyed into NCFast or just dictate that they came in signed a paper application and then decided not to continue the application process. We could upload the signed paper application into NCFast but just not key it in the system? Is it ok not to key a signed denied/withdrawn application into the system if it's dictated and scanned in? **The signed application must be keyed into NCFast.**
5. We have been told on other conference calls in the past that if CIP has already been used (\$600.00) client is approved for LIEAP that if the client has a disconnection, we can pledge that. **Yes, this would be the only time you would pledge LIEAP.**
6. Is there a need to verify income when the family is over the income limit based on their statement? **No**

7. Can you review what the statement regarding use of OLV to verify client's income at the time of the application. Are you saying that we cannot use OLV as verification of current income status?
When interviewing the client and they state that income is representative, OVS can be used. OLV should not be used unless OVS does not return expected data. Document case record thoroughly.
8. Since now we can use income if representative from another program for CIP are, we going to be able to use that for LIEAP now to instead of having to have the month prior verification especially with a dual application? LIEAP's base period is the months prior income. If income in case files is representative of base period income, it can be used.
9. I am having issues when keying an electric vendor on a fuel application. What are the steps?
Depending on what the issues are, you must click on Add Energy Provider on the Summary screen to add the electric vendor.
10. For LIEAP pending cases, in the case of giving the client a 2nd ten days to provide needed information because of a change in the pending LIEAP, how does NCFAS know that my deadline is the second 10th day? The system is not designed to count second 10 business days. The worker will have to track when the 2nd ten days expires.
11. Last year we had issues with these dual applications when we had to EDIT amounts in only ONE of the two programs. Has this been resolved this year? The edit issues with dual applications have been resolved with dual applications in NCFAS.